



TESTIMONY

BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

H.B. No. 6546 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO HOME HEALTH CARE
STATUTES

March 11, 2011

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Tracy Wodatch and I am the Vice President of Clinical and Regulatory Services at the Connecticut Association for Home Care and Hospice (CAHCH) whose member agencies serve over 100,000 elderly, disabled and terminally ill Connecticut citizens. I am also a Registered Nurse with over 25 years of experience, 10 of which have been in home care.

I am testifying today in **support** of HB 6546: An Act Concerning Revisions to Home Health Care Statutes. This bill is a product of recommendations made by the Home Health Legislative Work Group, which was established in January 2010 with the support of Representative Ritter. The Home Health Legislative Work Group engaged state agency leaders and CAHCH home health providers in collaboration to discuss concerns related to consumer and provider confusion pertaining to private hire caregivers and services provided by licensed home health agencies.

In Section 1 of this bill: (2)(b) proposes that a registered nurse, who is employed by a home health care agency, may provide in-home training to a privately-hired, unlicensed caregiver or personal care assistant. This is a very common situation in home care with more of our patients and family members relying on paid caregivers to assist them in their goal to remain at home. Currently, home health agency nurses are reluctant to train privately hired caregivers, because of concerns related to liability as well as potential Department of Public Health survey issues. These revisions clarify circumstances when a registered nurse employed by a home health agency can provide this type of training, and it also protects the nurse from being held liable should any injury or adverse outcome

be alleged by the unlicensed caregiver or personal care attendant. With the state's goals of rebalancing and the transition of clients to home health who require significant assistance, these revisions will make it much easier and safer to allow training by skilled home health nurses.

The second proposal in this bill is to repeal the language in “(f) and (k)” of Section 19a-490 of the general statutes. CAHCH supports the elimination of this confusing language related to “homemaker home health aide services” and “home health agency” as it has caused confusion for both providers and consumers.

The third recommendation is for a feasibility study to evaluate a Universal Abuse Registry for personal care attendants, homemaker companions, homemaker-home health aides or home health aides. CAHCH supports this recommendation with a suggested amendment to include all direct care health providers. CAHCH and the Legislative Work Group are confident that the study will prove effective resulting in the creation of an actual Universal Abuse Registry. Such a registry will require reporting between agencies, which will, most importantly, protect consumers, will reduce confusion regarding where to report or obtain abuse registry information, and will increase the efficiency of state operations.

CAHCH would like to express a special thank you to Representative Ritter for her support for this Work Group and to the Home Health Legislative Work Group for their tireless efforts and commendable collaboration. This is a viable and productive work group that should continue to meet to address our home care priorities ensuring appropriate, cost-effective, safe home care.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

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